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The Army's EO Program and Policies



Lesson 31: Women in the Military

Overview

- History of contributions of women in the military
- Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 (WASIA)
- Contemporary issues
- Strategies to effect the full integration of women



Introduction

- During this lesson we will discuss women in the military.
- Women and their role in the military are an issue under seemingly constant discussion.
- Women, in one capacity or another, have participated in every conflict in the establishment and defense of our nation.



Introduction

- Traditional attitudes and values towards women's "proper place" are slowly evolving into an attitude of acceptance and recognition, but there is a long way to go.
- As an Equal Opportunity Representative (EOR) it is important to have an understanding of the history of women in the military and their contributions and importance to the defense of our nation, in order to effectively combat negative stereotypes about women in uniform.



Overview

- Revolutionary War
- Civil War
- W.W.I
- W.W.II



Revolutionary War

- During the Revolutionary War, women often followed their husbands, sons, and brothers to battle.
- Some cooked, sewed, and washed clothes for the men.
- Some also worked as nurses.
- Even though the Army would not enlist women, some served by disguising themselves as men.
- The exact number who did this is unknown.



Revolutionary War

- From the Revolutionary War to the period when the military implemented the requirement to undergo a physical examination prior to enlistment, women have disguised themselves as men in order to serve in the military.
- For example, a lady named Lucy Brewer:
 - Disguised herself as a man
 - Fought on the Frigate Constitution during the War of 1812.



Revolutionary War

- Another lady named Loreta Velasquez, alias Harry T. Buford:
 - Disguised herself as a man
 - Invested her personal fortune to raise troops during the Civil War
 - Became an officer in the Confederate Army
 - Led men into battle at Bull Run and several other campaigns.
- During the Civil War, if you had money, you could buy a commission and buy people to serve under you.



Revolutionary War

- One of the more celebrated stories of the Revolutionary War was that of Molly Pitcher:
 - While the story may differ on exactly who she was, it is thought to be Mary Hayes, the wife of an artillery soldier of the 7th Pennsylvania Regiment.
 - The story goes that while she was providing water to the wounded soldiers on the battlefield, she dropped her water pitcher, picked up a rifle and began firing.
 - Replacements eventually took her position, but she remained as a rammer until an artilleryman relieved her.



Revolutionary War

- An eyewitness of the account reported that when an enemy cannon shot at her it tore off part of her petticoat, she remarked nonchalantly, that she was lucky and continued to assist the wounded.
- Another incident is the women known as Deborah Sampson:
 - Served in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment as Robert Shirtliffe.
 - Fought in many battles and often, like many of the men, had only rawhide strips to bind about her feet.
 - During one scouting mission in the winter, she was wounded in the head and thigh.



Revolutionary War

- Taken to a hospital, she only allowed the doctor to bandage her head, fearing her discovery if the rifle ball was removed from her thigh.
- Deborah Sampson served three years in the Army.
- When Paul Revere met her in 1804, he was so impressed that he asked the Massachusetts legislature to award her a pension. In 1805, she received \$4.00 a month as a disabled veteran. In 1818, her pension was increased to \$8.00.



Civil War

- During the Civil War it is estimated that about 400 women served in both Armies as soldiers.
- Others, followed their husbands, sons, or fathers to the front lines.
- Some women worked as spies, messengers, and nurses.
- Some women disguised as men went undetected throughout the war.
- Six women soldiers were discovered when they had babies.



Civil War

- One of the more notable female soldiers was Jennie Hodgers, known as Albert Cashier:
 - Served three years in the 95th Illinois Volunteer Infantry.
 - After the war she farmed and it wasn't until 1911, when hospitalized, was it discovered she was not a man.
 - During a pension hearing, one former member of the unit reported his failure to identify Cashier as a women, but remarked that the unit had often discussed the fact that he had no beard.
 - Cashier was also described by men in the unit as the shortest man in the company, but was a brave little soldier.



War World I

- It was only during W.W.I when the military implemented the physical examination.
- With the physical examination requirement, this was the first time women could not enter disguised as a man.
- The first women's component in the military was established by the Army in 1901.
 - This component was the Army Nurse Corps.
 - In 1908 the Navy Nurse Corps was authorized.
 - Initially, the Navy Nurse Corps was comprised of only 20 White women.



War World I

- Black women were not admitted into nursing organizations at this time.
- Laws which set up the Nursing Corps did not designate its members as officers or enlisted and it was not resolved until 1947 when the Army Nurse Act authorized their permanent commission rank.
- When the Army Nurse Corps was first organized, nurses were in the auxiliary status, or reserve status and only activated in times of emergency.
- The demands of W.W.I made it necessary for the military to utilize women in areas other than nursing in order to release men for combat duty.



War World I

- It seemed that the same perspective used in assessing minorities into systems applied to women, e.g., reject in times of peace and recruit in times of emergency.
- Rejection meant sending the women back into reserve status.
 - Laws covering the Army at this time restricted enlistment to men, so women could not be recruited.
 - The Navy began to employ civilian women under contract as telephone operators.
 - These women were basically serving as civil servants.
 - Congressional legislation passed in 1978 recognized these telephone operators as serving in a military status.



War World I

- **NOTE:** Notice it took until 1978 to recognize these women in the status that they deserved for serving during war time.
- The Navy Reserve Act of 1916 was a little different from other services in that it referred solely to enlistment of “persons” in the Navy.
 - As a result, about 13,000 women joined the Navy as reservists.
 - 30 of the women reservists were Black and were employed in a segregated office in Washington D.C..
 - In August of 1918 approximately 300 female Marine reservists were enlisted. There were also a few Coast Guard reservists, and their status closely paralleled the women in the Navy.



War World I

- The Army and Navy Nurse Corps also grew in response to the war.
 - There were approximately 22,000 Army nurses and 1,400 Navy nurses serving in the U.S. and overseas at this time.
 - These nurses worked in what are known as Casualty Clearing Stations, Surgical Field Teams, Mobile Evacuation and Base Hospitals, and on hospital trains and transport ships where the fighting was taking place or in close proximity.
 - With the exception of actual combat, these nurses fully participated in wartime duties.



War World I

- In 1918, Francis Elliott Davis was the first Black nurse admitted to the Red Cross Nursing Service.
 - In December 1918, a flue epidemic caused a huge demand for nurses.
 - As a result 18 Black nurses were finally appointed to the Army Nurse Corps approximately one month after Armistice Day.
- **NOTE:** Armistice Day is November 11 each year. Now called Veterans Day.



War World I

- At the end of the war, demobilization of women was the rule.
- By July of 1919 the Navy, Marine and Coast Guard women reservists were transferred to an inactive status and eventually were all discharged.
- The number of Army and Navy nurses retained on duty was minimal.



War World II

- During W.W.II 360,000 women joined the military in response to the recruiting call, “Free a man to fight.”
- The first women’s group to be organized by Congress in May 1942 was the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs).
 - They were hired under civilian contract with no military benefits.
 - As the Army had no separate structure, many management difficulties were encountered.
 - As a result, in 1943 Congress passed a Bill establishing the Women’s Army Corps (WACs) as a branch of the Army.
 - This also forced the administration to reconsider policies and attitudes.



War World II

- Under the WAAC, the women were not entitled to the same pay, benefits for dependents, or military rank as their male counterparts.
- When the other services had established the women's components as more than auxiliary branches, the WAACs started to resent it.
- The second women's organization was the acceptance of women into the Navy Women's Reserve.
 - It was established in July 1942 and named the WAVES for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service.



War World II

- Four months later the Coast Guard established the Coast Guard Women's Reserve.
 - Its members nicknamed the organization as SPARS which is an acronym taken from the Coast Guard's motto. "Semper Paratus" meaning "always ready."
- The Marine Corps established the Marine Corps Women's Reserve in February 1943.
 - Various acronyms and nicknames were suggested.
 - However, with the decision to accept women in the Marine Corps Reserve and as the Marine Corps Reserve was part of the Corps, they therefore would simply be called "Marines."



War World II

- To release male pilots for combat flying, the Army Air Force in August 1943 authorized a civilian Women Air Service Pilots (WASP) organization.
 - Although under civil service, it was subject to a number of military procedures.
 - The WASPs handled a variety of flying and aviation administrative duties.
 - Approximately 1,000 WASPS flew 60 million miles on operational assignments in 77 different types of aircraft before the organization was deactivated in December 1944.



War World II

- They ferried aircraft, towed targets for practice with live ammunitions, flew reconnaissance missions, and in general performed all types of flying missions except direct combat missions.
- Repeated attempts to militarize this group failed.
- It was not until 1977 that Congress passed a bill giving the Department of Defense (DoD) authority to do so.
- There were thousands of WACs who served in the Army Air Force as administrative personnel.
- These women were predecessors of today's Women in the Air Force (WAFs) which was established in 1948.



War World II

- The Army and Navy Nurse Corps was also expanded to meet the demands of the war.
 - From Iceland to the Pacific and in Europe, Africa, and North and South America, Army and Navy nurses supported U.S. fighting forces.
 - They faced risk and lost lives while serving in field medical facilities and aboard hospital ships and air transports.
 - 83 military nurses were interned as prisoners of war on Guam and in the Philippine Islands.
 - Nearly 2,000 women received military decorations for bravery and meritorious service.



War World II

- **NOTE:** It is interesting to note that all 67 women imprisoned in the Philippines survived. Whereas 30 percent of the men taken prisoner at the same time died before they were released.
 - Units were segregated by color throughout the war. Black women were affected severely by segregation.
 - The 4,000 Black women who served as WACs served in disproportionate numbers as cooks, bakers, laundry workers, hospital orderlies, and waitresses.
 - A few Black women did enter skilled fields such as medical stenographer, physical therapy, aircraft maintenance, teletype operating, and photography.



War World II

- After the struggle by Eta Thomas to open the Army Nurse Corps, only 500 of the 57,000 Army nurses that served in W.W.II were Black.
 - They were assigned to segregated hospitals.
 - There were only four Black nurses in the Navy.
 - The WAVES and SPARS refused to accept Black women until 1944 and then only in token numbers.
 - Opportunity for Black women was virtually nonexistent in the other branches.



War World II

- The Marine Corps Women's Reserve did not accept Black women during the war.
- None of the WASPs were Black.
- Black female officers were allowed to command only Black units.
- Only one Black WAC unit went overseas (the 6888th Central Post Office Battalion with 800 Black women).
- A small number of Chinese-American, Japanese-American, and Native-American women were enlisted in the WAC and assigned to White WAC units.



War World II

- A group of Puerto Rican woman were enlisted, trained, and assigned as a separate unit mainly because of language difficulties.
- Some 500 NISSEI recruits were wanted for employment as translators. However, only 13 were initially obtained.
- **NOTE:** The first generation of Japanese are the people who were born in Japan.
 - These are known as the ISSEI.
 - The second generation are NISSEI, and are born in the U.S. of ISSEI parents.



War World II

- Overall, the value of military women's contribution to the war effort was well summed up in the words of Albert Speer, Hitler's Weapons Production Chief, in a 1975 interview who said "How wise you were to bring your women into your military and into your labor force.
- Had we done that initially as you did, it could well have affected the whole course of the war.
- We would have found out, as you did, that women are equally effective and for some skills, superior to males."



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War World II

- Through all of the fighting women served only in a Reserve status and as a temporary part of the military.
- Their organizations were not integrated into the male official military and were culturally and legally accepted only as temporary helpers and very similar to other minorities.



Laws, Policies and Contributions

- WASIA
- DACOWITS
- VIETNAM
- CONTEMPORARY ISSUES



The Women's Armed Integration Act (WASIA)

- After W.W.II the largest and most rapid demobilization in U.S. history occurred.
- Military strength was reduced from 12.1 million in 1945 to about 1.4 million in 1947.
- The strength of military women went from 360,000 to 14,000. In 1948 Congress passed The Women's Armed Integration Act (WASIA).
- The purpose of WASIA was to determine the status women would have in the Armed Forces and how they would be accepted.



The Women's Armed Integration Act (WASIA)

- The following are some of the provisions:
 - Women under 18 couldn't enlist, if less the 21 , required parents consent
 - Husbands of military women had to prove dependency
 - Enlisted women could not exceed 2% of enlisted strength. Female Officers, excluding nurse, could not exceed 10% of total female enlisted strength
 - Officers could not progress beyond O-5 unless appointed Director of Women in their service. Then their attain O-6, however if reassigned, they reverted back to O-5.
 - No women could serve in command positions. Women could hold supervisory positions over women only
 - Army had no provision prohibiting combat. The Secretary of the Army could assign as needed



The Women's Armed Integration Act (WASIA))

- The Air Force code is Title 10, Sec 8549 which states that women cannot be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions.
- The Navy code is Title 10, Sec 6015 which states that women cannot be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions nor to duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships and naval transports.
- WASIA did not apply to the Coast Guard. In July 1949, Title 14, Sec 762 was passed to establish the Coast Guard Women's Reserve again. It limited women to authority over female reservists and to duty only in the U.S..



The Women's Armed Integration Act (WASIA))

- When the Korean War started, the only women sent were nurses.
 - The decade of the 1950's was a status quo period for military women.
 - Recruiting women was deemed of little importance because the draft was supplying the necessary manpower.
 - At the peak of the Korean War, women in the Army numbered approximately 12,000, the Navy 8,000, the Air Force 13,000, and the Marine Corps 2,400.



Defense Advisory Committee on Women In The Service

(DACOWITS)

- In 1951 the Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall appointed a committee called the Defense Advisory Committee on Women In The Service (DACOWITS) with the following charter:
 - To advise him on all matters pertaining to women in the military.
 - To interpret to the public the need for and the roles of women in the services and to promote public acceptance of the military as a career for women.
- DACOWITS is a civilian advisory committee comprised of prominent citizens with approximately 30 people serving three years of unpaid terms.



Defense Advisory Committee on Women In The Service

- (DACOWITS)
- Each member of the committee serves as an individual and not as a representative of the group.
 - DACOWITS meets twice a year and has four separate executive committee meetings annually.
 - To Advise on all matters pertaining to women in the military
 - To interpret to the public the need for and roles of women in the military and to promote public acceptance of the military as a career for women



Public Law 90-130

- Under pressures from the expanding role of women in the labor force and the large personnel drain of Vietnam, DoD established a task force in 1966 to reassess the role of women in the armed forces.
- The study group established the expansion that was to occur later. As a result of that study, the first change did not come until 1967 when Public Law 90-130 was passed.
- It allowed each of the services to set up its own number quotas, and struck down grade ceilings.



Public Law 90-130

- Policies were changed in the following areas.
- Men and women can enlist at 18 without parental consent
- Changed proof of dependency
 - An Air Force female officer named Lieutenant Sharon Frontiero took her case to the Supreme Court challenging her need to prove her husband a dependent, while male military members did not have to provide such proof. In 1973 the Supreme Court decided in her favor and the service policy was then changed.
- Two percent ceiling removed and could be appoint generals



Public Law 90-130

- Allow women to request waivers to stay in the service. In 1975, DoD allowed pregnant women to remain in the military unless they asked to get out
 - Until the beginning of 1972, women who became pregnant while serving in the Navy or Marine Corps were involuntarily separated. In 1972, the policy was changed to allow women to request waivers to stay in the Service. In 1975, DoD reversed its pregnancy policy. Pregnant women were allowed to remain in service unless they asked to get out. Women can now remain in service after giving birth, adopting or becoming a step parent by marriage. Both male and female sole parents must sign a statement regarding deployment provisions or dependent care plan.



Public Law 90-130

- Women could participate in ROTC programs and military academies
- Women could serve aboard ships
- Women could participate in Aviation
- Women could serve in all but direct combat-related MOSs
- In the Navy, women cannot be assigned to duty in aircraft engaged in combat missions nor to duty on vessels of the Navy except hospital ships and naval transport.



Vietnam

- The situation in the military during the Vietnam War was similar to the Korean War in that the women in the services were ready and anxious to go overseas with the fighting forces, but the services were reluctant to send them.
- Approximately 7,500 women served in Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines.
- Another approximately 600 to 700 Air Force women served in Southeast Asia.



Vietnam

- At the height of the Vietnam War in 1968, the strength of women in the Armed Forces reached 33,000, which was still under the two percent ceiling.
- Of the 7,500 women who served in Vietnam, most were Army, Air Force, and Navy nurses.
- As before, some heroic women gave their lives and hundreds received decorations for courageous and meritorious service by both the U. S. and Vietnam governments.



Vietnam

- The largest group of women to serve in Vietnam were nurses and constituted another chapter in women's heroism during the war.
 - They were exposed to combat conditions and fighting forces.
 - The nurses in Vietnam served in 18 hospitals, nine dispensaries, and naval ships.
 - While most were in areas that were strongly defended, there were some close behind fighting troops, which treated casualties brought in by medics and helicopters.
 - Even with the relative security of medical positions it did not keep all nurses from physical danger.

Vietnam

- In 1964, four nurses were awarded Purple Hearts for injuries sustained during a Viet Cong bombing of Saigon
 - Even though they were wounded themselves they provided first aid and assistance to others who were more seriously injured.
 - On the Vietnam memorial in Washington, DC there are eight names of women. Typical of somewhat super human emotional and physical feats expected of these nurses was the expectations that they would not suffer any of the physical and emotional disorders that male veterans of the Vietnam era complained about. It took years before the Veteran's Administration recognized that the women nurses who served would exhibit Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PYSD) symptoms.

Vietnam

- Even the Readjustment Counseling Program enacted in 1979 specifically to address these problems ignored women veterans who served in Vietnam.
 - With the establishment of the Women's Working Group under the Readjustment Counseling Program in 1982 attention was finally paid to special forms of stress and disturbances that war time experience had on the women who had been in Vietnam.
 - Women counselors were assigned to outreach centers and sensitivity training given to staff so that centers can respond to emotional problems and other needs of the women Vietnam veterans.



Vietnam

- It was suggested that the performance of nurses in Vietnam as well as Korea and W.W.II, demonstrated the physical and emotional endurance of women under the most trying and dangerous circumstances.
- Women with little or no indoctrination in military thinking have shown their ability to not only accept military discipline, but also to create their own corps of compatible standards of military demeanor.
- While nurses were suffering and dying under combat conditions, the media image of wartime nurses created highly romanticized and sanitized realities. Even in the combat zone, the few women who were there, were expected to uphold the feminine image.



Vietnam

- The Pentagon's official attitude was one of not employing women in any position that didn't meet with society's approval.
- A policy forbade WACs to be photographed on, near, or with weapons, and they received no training.
 - One nurse, Monica Schwinn, was held for four years as a prisoner of war in the famed Hanoi Hilton.



Post Vietnam

- In 1975 the separate promotion list for women officers was eliminated and women began competing with men.
- In 1976 the Army created a new source of women officers. Women now graduated from West Point.
- On 30 December, 1976 the Army deactivated the Officers School at Fort McClellan, AL. where the WAC officers had been trained since W.W.II.
 - In October of 1978, under Public Law 95-485 the WAC Corps was officially eliminated.
 - At this time women were on the road to integration with men in the services.



Post Vietnam

- ERA
 - During the early part of 1972, a task force established by the Secretary of Defense, set out to prepare contingency plans for increased use of women to offset possible shortages of male recruits.
- Grenada
 - Two of the four military police platoon leaders were women. They were responsible for the security of outlying regions of Grenada.
- Attack on Libya
 - During the attack on Libya in April of 1986 six Air Force females served aboard KC-19s and KC-135s involved in the attack.



Post Vietnam

- Operation Just Cause

- In 1989, during Operation Just Cause (Panama) Captain Linda Bray led 30 soldiers to take control of a kennel for Panamanian Defense Force attack dogs. What was thought to be a routine mission became a three-hour infantry firefight. The mission was a success.

- Operation Desert Storm

- In Desert Storm, the issue of women in combat was heightened even more than in W.W.II, as the advanced technology used in the war obscured the areas of combat and noncombat for the approximately 41,000 female troops who participated.
- MAJ Rhonda Cornum, a flight surgeon, and SPC Melissa Rathbun- Nealy, a truck driver, were taken prisoner of war.



Contemporary Issues

- Congress eliminated the combat exclusion law in 1993
- Repealed the laws prohibiting women from becoming combat pilots
- On October 1, 1994, the Army opened 32,00 ground jobs to women
- Army's most senior leaders are drawn from branches closed to women
- Kara Hultgreen-Navy Tomcat pilot
- Gender Integrated Training (GIT)
- Medical issues and absences



Conclusion

- The role of women in the military has evolved along the same lines as the roles of other minority groups in the military.
- They served with distinction when the need arose and were disbanded in times of peace.
- The military has made strides to improve the issues of equality for women serving in the armed forces.
- Significant issues, such as women performing duties in combat related fields, remain to be answered.

